

**Baltimore City Heritage Area  
National Heritage Area Feasibility Study  
Draft Action Framework (Technical Memo 7)**

The Baltimore City Heritage Area (BCHA) planning process— to complete a National Heritage Area Feasibility Study and a Maryland Heritage Area Authority Management Action Plan Update (MHAA Update)—is well underway, with an interpretive framework and a market assessment completed. Four Advisory Committee meetings and a number of interviews and site visits have taken place. A careful review of the original MHAA Management Action Plan was conducted with BCHA staff to determine what goals still held relevance for BCHA.

This document, the Draft Action Framework (Framework), combines the findings of these pieces of the planning process and will be the basis for the MHAA Update. Following receipt of comment on this draft, MMA will conduct meetings with key BCHA officials, city and state leaders to explore potential partnerships and assess support. Changes to the Framework, possible partnerships, and order-of-magnitude costs will be reflected in a revised draft, which will be posted on the BCHA website, and circulated widely for public comment. It will be the subject of a public meeting to be held on Thursday November 9, 2006.

The Framework lays out a vision for BCHA and goals for interpretation, preservation, development, neighborhoods, and management. Each goal includes strategies with underlying action items and, in some cases, specific examples of what the action items could be. Although the original Management Action Plan included a promotion goal, BCHA's collaborative relationship with the Baltimore Area Convention and Visitors Association (BACVA, which provides the promotion function) and a need for increased attention to how and where the cultural heritage of Baltimore is presented, spurred a shift from promotion to interpretation.

There are two items that should be noted as one reads this document. First, there may be changes to the current BCHA boundaries as a result of the planning process. Second, the thematic framework for the heritage area merges African American story lines throughout rather than dedicating one subtheme to African American history in Baltimore. It was felt by the BCHA Interpretive Advisory Group and the consulting team that the stories of Black Baltimore are inextricably woven into the city's other narratives, and are a key area of focus for the BCHA in the forthcoming MHAA Update. .

## **Vision**

Ten years from now...Baltimore enjoys broad national and international recognition for the richness of its history and culture. With a focus on the bicentennial of the War of 1812, the BCHA and scores of museums, historic sites, and cultural attractions collaborated on programming to bring greater visibility to the city's role in shaping a distinctively American identity. Through development of capital projects, trails, tours, exhibits, performances, celebrations and educational events integrated around an engaging set of themes, the profile of the Baltimore's cultural heritage has never been higher with proud residents and a growing stream of visitors whose repeat visits and extended stays have had

measurable economic results. Private investment in development that complements the city's cultural heritage—adaptive reuse of historic structures, tourism-serving businesses, and more—is increasingly common. As never before, Baltimore's heritage resources are viewed as essential to its quality of life and economic well-being.

## Goals

The Action Framework includes five strategic goals—one for each of the plan's core components. These goals frame the strategies and action items needed to attain the vision. They are:

**Interpretation:** Interpret Baltimore as the unique port city where an American identity was forged and refined.

**Preservation:** Strengthen support for the preservation of Baltimore's heritage resources.

**Development:** Increase the economic benefits of heritage tourism in Baltimore.

**Neighborhood:** Assist neighborhoods to improve their quality of life, become more visitor-ready, and balance tourism and community.

**Management:** Assure a strong, sustainable management organization for the Baltimore City Heritage Area.

## Strategies & Actions

**Interpretive Goal** = Interpret Baltimore as the unique port city where an American identity was forged and refined.

- **Strategy:** Lead a collaborative process to craft a detailed interpretive plan for the heritage area, using the interpretive framework as a basis. Engage historians, heritage organizations, sites, museums, interpretive specialists, and other relevant stakeholders.
- **Strategy:** Using the BCHA interpretive framework and plan, lead collaborative efforts to present the stories of Baltimore's contributions to America's history and cultural expression in ways that invite engagement and raise Baltimore's profile as a place with significant local and national heritage.
  - *Action:* Encourage interpretive institutions and organizations operating historic sites and museums to frame their offerings in ways that engage people with the concepts in the interpretive framework and plan and fill gaps in the story.
    - Example: Distribute communications materials highlighting the interpretive framework and plan to sites and institutions.
    - Example: Encourage and support collaboration around opportunities for interpreting portions of the Portal to American Identity overarching theme—through joint exhibits, tours, and more.
  - *Action:* Produce excellent communications materials that provide context for interpretive activities in BCHA.

**Comment [bp1]:** Isn't collaborative adoption of the framework accomplished as part of the Plan Update/NHA process?

- Example: In partnership with BACVA, GBHA, and others, develop a dynamic web presence, including robust historical information on Baltimore linked to visitor information. Use the BCHA interpretive framework and plan to tie Baltimore's cultural heritage to the "Portal to American Identity" overarching theme and subthemes. (Note: these theme and subtheme titles do not have to be the final public titles for an institution's programs or materials. The "invisible" interpretive framework simply organizes key messages.)
  - Example: Encourage the creation of popular publications that explore Baltimore's cultural heritage through the interpretive framework and plan.
  - Example: Give priority in funding decisions to interpretive projects that are consistent with the framework and plan.
- **Strategy:** Leverage the bicentennial of the War of 1812, the Battle of Baltimore, and the creation of the flag and the poem that became the Star-Spangled Banner to create greater understanding of Baltimore's role in national history.
  - *Action:* Support expansion of Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine beyond the park unit's boundaries. Candidate sites for related interpretive activities, programming, and support include the Star Spangled Banner Flag House, Patterson Park, Maryland Historical Society, Battle Monument, Pride of Baltimore II, and the Fells Point Maritime Museum. Partner with Fort McHenry, Friends of Fort McHenry, and the National Park Service. Working models of expanded National Park Service presence/operations in urban settings include Boston's NHP and Independence NHP in Philadelphia.
  - *Action:* Lead and coordinate local efforts to celebrate the bicentennial of the War of 1812 and the Battle of Baltimore. Use the newly developed interpretive framework and plan to convey the importance of these events in the shaping of American identity. Embed the key interpretive messages throughout an exciting set of events, exhibits, and public programs created in partnership with schools, BACVA, BOPA, GBHA, and others.
  - *Action:* Engage with the Smithsonian National Museum of American History to coordinate interpretation in anticipation of the 2008 reinstallation of the Star-Spangled Banner.
- **Strategy:** Focus effort on nationally significant stories known to enjoy popularity among cultural heritage travelers.
  - *Action:* Support enhanced visibility of and accessibility to Baltimore's national heritage stories, including:
    - Example: The African American push for equality and opportunity
      - Support collaborative efforts to interpret Thurgood Marshall's life in Baltimore. Support and staff a mayoral-appointed Advisory Committee.
      - Support planning and fundraising efforts for the interpretation, preservation, and possible reuse of PS 103, including a study to determine whether PS 103 and other historic properties in Upton

warrant designation as a National Park Service (NPS) Unit. Collaborators include the Thurgood Marshall Advisory Committee, NPS, the Upton Planning Committee, and the Pennsylvania Avenue Redevelopment Collaborative (PARC).

- Support the development of the Arabber Center on North Fremont Avenue in collaboration with the Arabber Preservation Society and the PARC.
- Example: Urban revitalization and restoration of the urban ecosystem.
- Action: Conduct research to determine the popular appeal of other significant stories which Baltimore tells.
  - Example: The pursuit of religious freedom and tolerance
  - Example: The work of a Chesapeake port city
  - Example: City planning, parks, and public works in the Chesapeake landscape
  - Example: Diversity in a border city
- **Strategy:** Teach American history using Baltimore's cultural heritage resources.
  - Action: Pursue support to connect Baltimore's public schools with the city's cultural heritage resources.
    - Example: Expand the Teaching American History project in partnership with the Baltimore City Public School System (BCPSS) and GBHA, seeking sustainable funding for this initiative.
    - Example: Secure the Civic Engagement education project as a permanent program through BCPSS, in partnership with the community, business and NPS.
    - Example: Work collaboratively with Baltimore Partners for Enhanced Learning to develop systems to enhance transportation and coordination of visits by BCPSS students to Baltimore's cultural heritage resources.
  - Action: Develop a clearinghouse of cultural heritage curricula that meet the standards of the Maryland Department of Education and BCPSS, promoting their use among city schools and linking schools to programs that provide support for implementation.
    - Example: Use the interpretive framework and plan for the BCHA as a basis for developing new curricula that meet the standards of the Maryland Department of Education and BPSS. Provide four core tracks related to the four core sub-themes of the interpretive framework.
- **Strategy:** Structure heritage tourism marketing messages around the BCHA interpretive framework and plan.

- *Action:* Work with BACVA to create content-rich marketing text for online and printed visitor guides that focuses on the city's heritage sites in the context of the Portal to American Identity theme and its subthemes.
- *Action:* Collaboratively support development of high-visibility promotional campaigns around the War of 1812 / Battle of Baltimore bicentennial that include sites relevant to the overarching theme and sub-themes in the interpretive framework and plan.
  - Example: Work with NPS and BACVA in the design and testing of exhibits and contents for the new Fort McHenry Visitor Center, and build the interpretive and marketing messages.

**Preservation Goal = Strengthen support for the preservation of Baltimore's heritage resources.**

- **Strategy:** Lead advocacy for heritage tourism product development and promotion.
  - *Action:* Coordinate efforts to maximize existing and new public and private financial investment in Baltimore's heritage tourism product.
  - *Action:* Study and report on the economic and quality of life benefits of that investment, and the benefits of heritage and cultural tourism, to reach program officials, community leaders and the general public.
  - *Action:* Work with BACVA to craft messages that effectively promote heritage and cultural offerings in Baltimore to target audiences..
- **Strategy:** Heighten recognition of and support for stewardship of heritage resources associated with the War of 1812 / Battle of Baltimore.
  - *Action:* Coordinate outreach and education efforts that generate energy and support for War of 1812 history among public leaders at the local, state, and national level.
  - *Action:* Generate "grass tops" support for stewardship among neighborhoods and organizations whose geography and/or mission aligns them with War of 1812 resources.
    - Example: Support efforts by the Patterson Park neighborhood and Friends of Patterson Park to preserve and interpret the role of the park in the Battle of Baltimore.
- **Strategy:** Heighten recognition of and support for stewardship of heritage resources associated with the African American push for equality and opportunity, urban revitalization and restoration of the urban ecosystem, and other assets associated with stories that resonate with cultural heritage travelers.
  - *Action:* Collaborate with BACVA's African American Tourism Advisory Committee, the Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP), Baltimore Heritage, and others, to identify and designate important African American historic sites as Baltimore City Landmarks.

- Action: Support efforts to meet the goals and requirements of the Chesapeake Bay Program, the City's National Pollution Discharge Elimination Permit (NPDES) and tributary strategies.
- Action: Assist in construction of ultra-urban best management practices as identified in the Watershed 263 plan.
- **Strategy:** Support efforts to strengthen the city's historic preservation efforts.
  - *Action:* Assist in the preservation of historically significant sites in Baltimore.
    - Example: Support expansion of the city's historic property tax credit program.
    - Example: Assist efforts to disseminate information and provide technical assistance around financial incentives for historic preservation.
  - *Action:* Collaborate with historic preservation advocacy groups, CHAP, and the Department of Planning in the development and implementation of a citywide historic preservation plan.
  - *Action:* Collaborate with CHAP, the Department of Planning, and other City agencies in the inventory, development, and implementation of best management practices for City-owned historic and cultural property.
    - Example: Coordinate the development of management agreements with non-City entities for the re-use of historic properties for educational and cultural tourism purposes (e.g. Peale Museum, H.L. Mencken House, P.S. 103).
  - *Action:* Assist in feasibility planning for the construction of a new Baltimore City archive and archeological conservation and research facility.

**Development Goal = Increase the economic benefits of heritage tourism in Baltimore.**

- **Strategy:** Support efforts to develop or expand businesses serving the heritage tourism market.
  - Action: Broker connections between tourism-serving businesses and the resources they need to succeed, including lenders, public agencies and the media.
    - Example: Seek support for a staff position focused on small business development in the heritage area.
  - Action: Encourage and assist development of overnight accommodations, especially through adaptive uses of underutilized historic buildings, to fill the city's current gap in supply.
  - Action: Encourage and assist development of businesses that enable residents and visitors to enjoy Baltimore's waterways and links to the Chesapeake.

- Example: Assist development of a private water-based tour service that focuses on the War of 1812, the Battle of Baltimore, and Francis Scott Key's experience during the battle.
- Action: Encourage and assist development of businesses that enable residents and visitors to explore Baltimore inland from the Inner Harbor.
- Action: Support establishment of micro enterprise loans for start-up businesses providing tourism services.
- Action: Participate in the development and implementation of a strategic plan for the Mayor's Office of Employment Development that links employers providing tourism services to job seekers.
- **Strategy:** Ensure that visitor-serving businesses positively represent Baltimore.
  - Action: Provide support for and links to hospitality and guide trainings like those available through GBHA and Maryland's Office of Tourism Development.
  - Action: Expand and transform the "Authentic Baltimore" program into the city's official quality stamp for heritage tourism businesses.
  - Action: Create partnerships with tourism industry training organizations, such as the Baltimore Academy for Tourism and Hospitality, to provide future front line staff with heritage tourism context.

**Neighborhood Goal = Assist neighborhoods to improve their quality of life, become more visitor-ready, and balance tourism and community.**

- **Strategy:** Foster connections between the Inner Harbor and key cultural heritage attractions in the neighborhoods. .
  - Action: Sustain and continue development of the Star-Spangled Trails, in cooperation with neighborhood-based partners, for guided and self-guided touring.
  - Action: Work with NPS to create a trailhead at Fort McHenry, modeled on the trailhead at the Inner Harbor visitor center.
  - Action: Identify and pursue opportunities to build safe, attractive pedestrian connections (e.g. the Key Highway crossing warrants improvement to wayfinding and streetscape).
  - Action: Support the development of connections on land and water, such as trolleys, busses, and the water taxi (e.g., work with Ed Kane's Water Taxi and Fort McHenry towards year-round ticket purchases at the fort or on the boat).
  - Action: Make the city's heritage tours (neighborhood walking tours, etc.) available in downloadable online format and link to those that have or will have an online presence, remote radio transmission, and other technologies.

- Action: Coordinate implementation of the Charles Street Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan.
  - Example: Convert the part-time Guided Tour Coordinator position into a full time Trails and Byways Manager.
- Action: Support development of the Charles Street Circulator.
- **Strategy:** Make Baltimore's less-visited neighborhoods feel inviting to visitors.
  - Action: Support investment in less-visited neighborhoods with strong visitor potential within the BCHA.
  - Action: Support creation and distribution of neighborhood guides that include clear, easy-to-follow maps and directions for heritage and other attractions, visitor services, and historical information. Potential partner organizations that are already providing some of this information include:
    - Baltimore City: official website includes neighborhood history and cultural information
    - The Baltimore Sun: neighborhood guides provide information on visitor services and an assortment of attractions although some relevant historic neighborhoods are missing, and wayfinding/transportation is inadequately addressed by inset maps.
    - BACVA: online search by neighborhood is a good attraction locator. However, a number of historic neighborhoods are missing from the search options, and search results do not include wayfinding/transportation or visitor services.
    - The Live Baltimore Home Center: neighborhood histories are provided, but the amount of information varies by neighborhood with some focusing heavily on development patterns.
    - The Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance: Baltimore Fun Guide has multiple options for searching but does not include some heritage area neighborhoods and offerings
  - Action: Complete and maintain the pedestrian and automobile oriented wayfinding signage systems to help visitors navigate the neighborhoods and attractions of the BCHA.
  - Action: Continue and expand the Urban Park Ranger program as more trails and neighborhoods become visitor-ready and welcoming.
  - Action: Coordinate design, fabrication and installation of a new system of water taxi landing signs.
  - Action: Support development and implementation of plans to reduce trash in BCHA neighborhoods, Main Streets, parks and open spaces.
  - Action: Assist the implementation of the Bicycle Master Plan.



- Action: Develop new visitor centers and enhance existing visitor centers.
- **Strategy:** Incorporate recreation into the connective work of the heritage area, using the city's green spaces and waterways to link neighborhoods, attractions, and commercial areas.
  - Action: Seek support for a staff position focused on recreation, parks, green infrastructure, ecotourism, and urban/outdoor adventure in the heritage area.
  - Action: Support development and implementation of a citywide master plan for parks and open space.
  - Action: Collaborate with the Department of Recreation and Parks, Parks and People, the Gwynns Falls Trail Council and others to improve and promote use of the city's trails system.
  - Action: Support completion of the Harbor Promenade and the Middle Branch Park trail systems.
  - Action: Support plans for the creation of a greenway trail system.
  - Action: Support development and implementation of a Waterway Trash Management Plan to ensure compliance with NPDES and Tributary Strategies.
  - Action: Assist in increasing Baltimore's green infrastructure by increasing the number of trees and the size of the canopy.

**Management Goal = Assure a strong, sustainable management organization for the Baltimore City Heritage Area.**

- **Strategy:** Build broad, non-partisan leadership support for the heritage area.
- **Strategy:** Develop a sustainable, diversified range of financial resources for the heritage area.
  - Action: Work with GBCA and others to establish regional policies to increase support for cultural activities in Baltimore.
  - Action: Pursue foundation and public agency grants.
  - Action: Engage in appropriate revenue-generating entrepreneurial activities.
  - Action: Pursue dedicated revenue streams through the city.
- **Strategy:** Increase National Park Service presence in Baltimore.
  - Action: Pursue National Heritage Area designation.
  - Action: Support efforts to expand Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine beyond the park unit's current boundaries.

- Action: Support efforts to determine whether PS 103 and other historic properties in Upton warrant designation as a NPS Unit.
- **Strategy:** Build staff resources incrementally as programmatic needs require and financial resources permit.
  - Action: Convert the part-time Guided Tour Coordinator position into a full time Trails and Byways Manager.
  - Action: Seek support for a staff position focused on small business development in the heritage area
  - Action: Seek support for a staff position focused on recreation, parks, green infrastructure, ecotourism, and urban/outdoor adventure in the heritage area.

## Next Steps

This is a draft document. Your comments will help us refine the draft goals, strategies and actions. Please send your comments no later than November 3, 2006, to:

- Jackie Barton, Project Manager, Mary Means and Associates, 614-278-8008, [jbarton@marymeans.com](mailto:jbarton@marymeans.com).
- Bill Pencek, Director, Baltimore City Heritage Area, 410-396-1954, [bill.pencek@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:bill.pencek@baltimorecity.gov) .